

EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL DROPOUTS IN THE SAYDEL CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL SYSTEM

An abstract of a Field Report by
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October 1972
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The problem: Because of the high percentage of dropouts in the Saydel Consolidated School District this study was undertaken to determine what factors were involved in the decision of the dropout. The study involved individuals who had terminated their education during the past three school years 1969-70, 1970-71, and 1971-72.

Procedure: To identify the similar characteristics shared by the individuals who had been high school dropouts during the years 1969-70, 1970-71, and 1971-72. To determine (by using information obtained from the cumulative record) if the similarities of each individual were consistent enough that it might have been possible to predict that these individuals were potential dropouts.

Findings and conclusions: The decision of each individual to drop-out of school is related to a multiplicity of factors. The following factors appear to be the most useful predictors in identifying the potential dropout. (1) The attendance record of the individual from the elementary to the secondary level, (2) The age of the student as he enters the high school years, (3) The academic performance of the individual, (4) The occupational and educational levels of the parents, and (5) The grade level of the student at the termination of his schooling.

Recommendations: The following should be done:
(1) The cumulative record must contain more "personal" information about each individual. (2) The guidance department should serve as a mediator between school personnel, parents and the potential dropout. (3) Guidance personnel should work closely with elementary teachers in identifying potential dropouts. (4) Changes in curriculum to offer more relevant courses.

EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL DROPOUTS IN THE
SAYDEL CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL SYSTEM

A Field Report
Presented to
The School of Graduate Studies
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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science in Education

by
Thomas Don Wilson
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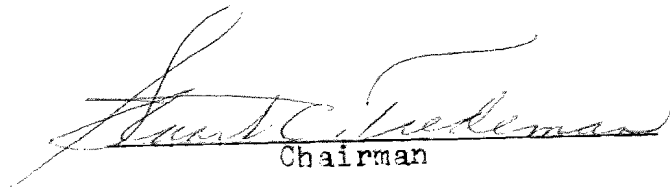
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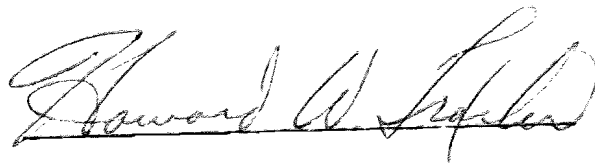
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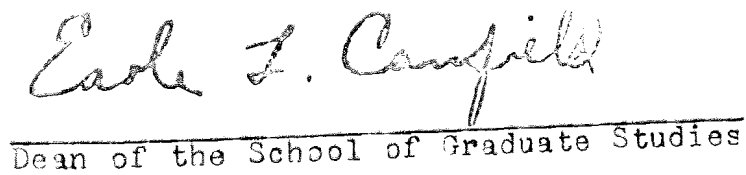

Dean of the School of Graduate Studies

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Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

I. INTRODUCTION

There are certain problems in the field of education which periodically come under examination. These problems are generally carefully examined, discussed, and analyzed. One of these problems which is receiving major attention now is the "dropout problem."

The attention focused on the dropout problem has been placed there by parents, community, educators, and society in general. Never before has so much emphasis been placed on a high school education as a minimum educational goal. Therefore, graduation from high school has now become an expected accomplishment of all young people.

Despite these pressures to continue and complete their high school education, a large percentage of students still choose to terminate their education before they have completed their senior year.

II. PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. This investigation was intended to study and determine factors which could be

used in the early identification of potential dropouts. The intention was to identify those characteristics shared by the individuals selected for this study who had dropped out of school. Through this study attempt to discover if the similarities shared by all are consistent enough that it might have been possible to predict that these persons were indeed potential dropouts. Specifically the study had these objectives:

1. To determine if the cumulative record offers sufficient information to reveal the reasons behind the student's decision to drop out.
2. To determine the common characteristics of the individuals who dropped out of school.
3. To determine if the information gained from the cumulative records could be used to predict and identify dropout tendencies in individuals prior to their dropping out of school.

Importance of the problem. The importance of the elementary school in the early identification of the potential dropout is paramount. It is probable that many problems contributing to the withdrawal of students in later grades are first felt during the elementary school years. The student may very well become a psychological dropout during the crucial elementary years. It is evident that any effort to keep these pupils in school should begin

as early as possible in their elementary careers.¹

Limitations of the study. This study was limited geographically to the district of the Saydel Consolidated Schools, located north and east of the city of Des Moines. This study included only thirty of those students who attended the Saydel Consolidated Schools, and who terminated their education before they completed twelfth grade during the school years 1969-70, 1970-71, and 1971-72.

III. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

For clarification, the following terms used in this research are defined:

Dropout. A pupil who leaves a school, for any reason except death, before graduation or completion of a program of studies and without transferring to another school. This includes students who voluntarily leave school and students who are excluded from school by the principal or school board.

Psychological dropout. A student that is chronologically not old enough to leave school, but exhibits the same characteristics of the dropout, merely waiting until he is old enough.

¹Hugh A. Livingston, "Key to the Dropout Problem: The Elementary School," Elementary School Journal, LIX (February, 1959), 267-270.

Predictors of success. Current and previous grade marks are the primary and at times the only measure of a student's success or ability to succeed. Yet it is constantly stressed that grading is one of the most subjective areas of teaching. If the future of a student is to be evaluated objectively, other factors should be utilized.

Achievement test scores, aptitude test scores, and other academic criteria have been proven reliable and valid in predicting success.¹ Any criteria then, termed predictors of success, that show a more than chance relationship between themselves and a student's achievement can and should be used to evaluate a particular student's chances to succeed in future work.

Early identification. The "early" is interpreted to mean identification of potential dropouts before they terminate their schooling.

Elementary school. The elementary school is interpreted to specify grades kindergarten through six.

Junior high school. The junior high school includes grades seven through nine.

¹Jerome E. Doppelt and Alexander G. Wesman, "The Differential Aptitude Tests as Predictors of Achievement Test Scores," Journal of Educational Psychology, XLIII (April, 1952), 210-217.

Senior high school. The senior high school includes grades ten through twelve.

IV. METHODS OF PROCEDURE

The research was carried out according to the following plan.

1. A review of the recent research was conducted on the subject of high school dropouts.

2. Permission to carry out this study was sought and secured from the administrative heads of the Saydel Consolidated School District.

3. An examination was made of the cumulative school records of thirty students who had terminated their education before graduation during the 1969-70, 1970-71, 1971-72 school years.

4. A listing was made of the characteristics of these dropouts obtained from their individual cumulative records. This information included:

- a. Age of student when dropped.
- b. Sex of student.
- c. Grade when dropped.

Family status:

- d. Occupation of parents.
- e. Age of parents.
- f. Education of parents.
- g. Marital status of parents.

h. Number of children in family.

School achievement:

i. Reading achievement.

j. Mathematics achievement.

k. Other academic areas.

l. I.Q. of student.

m. Iowa Test of Basic Skills scores.

n. Iowa Test of Educational Development
scores.

School attendance:

o. Attendance record kindergarten through
date of drop-out.

5. The information obtained from the cumulative folder was collected, recorded, and thoroughly examined. The data were then analyzed and summarized in order that conclusions and recommendations could be formulated.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Education in the United States is committed to a program of education for all educable youth through the secondary school years. Many individuals, however, feel that education is neither necessary nor relevant to them in their particular situation. The compulsory age limit has been established in the belief that a certain amount of secondary education for each individual is a necessity. It is the responsibility of the schools to develop a program so appropriate that all educable youth will be encouraged to complete a secondary education.¹

This indicates, then, that the school has a responsibility to all youth who attend. But what about those who choose not to attend, to terminate, instead their education before they complete their twelfth year? Whose responsibility is the dropout? Greene stated:

The dropout is not really a school problem. The fact of the matter is that the school solves its problems by getting rid of the student.²

¹L. A. Van Dyke and K. B. Hoyt, The Drop-out Problem in Iowa Schools (Des Moines, Iowa: Iowa State Department of Public Instruction, 1958), p. 1.

²Bert I. Greene, Preventing Student Dropouts (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 11.

Is this to be construed, then, that schools should not be concerned with the problem? No, but rather the point is to recognize that once the student leaves the school, other agencies are forced to cope with the problem.

The problem of the dropout is now being recognized for what it is (educational, social, political, economic, and legal), a problem for the entire community and the nation. This, then, calls for a concentrated effort from all of these segments to help combat the dropout problem.¹

I. IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS OF DROPOUTS

Identifying the potential dropout is probably the single most important factor in any program geared to preventing school dropouts. This appears to be a simple task, but is complicated due to the variety and pattern of factors which cause young people to drop out of school.

There is almost virtual agreement that the dropout is not the product of a hurriedly-made decision. Rather, he is a result of many years of failure and rejection. He has had a long period of time to develop a poor self-concept and unhealthy attitudes toward school and school personnel, and he has had lots of help all along the way. In short, leaving school is only the end of a process that began many years earlier.²

Many studies have been made to ascertain how dropouts differed from non-dropouts, with the assumption that if potential dropouts could be identified, they could be

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 32.

given the help to keep them in school.

Coplein suggested techniques for use in the study of dropouts. One of the techniques he suggested is the study of certain personal characteristics that appeared on the students' cumulative record,¹ such as:

1. The age of the student when he left school.
2. The grade in which the student was enrolled when he left school.
3. The educational attainment of the parents of the student.
4. The socio-economic status of the family of the student.
5. The occupation of the parents of the student.
6. The student's reading level.
7. The student's marks in school.
8. The intelligence level of the dropout.
9. The discipline record of the dropout.
10. The attendance record of the dropout.²

A study by the State of Illinois in 1962 of the holding power of the school listed these personal characteristics of potential dropouts. (1) The number of years a child had been retained, (2) what courses of study he selected, (3) how often he was absent, (4) how low his

¹Leonard B. Coplein, "Techniques for the Study of Dropouts," Clearing House, XLV (May, 1962), 527-528.

²Ibid.

aptitude and achievement test scores were, (5) how low in class rank he was, (6) how low in occupational status his father was, and (8) how little education his father had.¹

In a study by Walters and Kranzler these factors were listed concerning the early identification of school dropouts:

- (1) The age of the student by the ninth grade,
- (2) the lack of arithmetic achievement, more than lack of reading achievement, and (3) the occupation of the father.²

In this section, some of the research concerning the examination of the personal characteristics are summarized under the subheadings: (1) Attendance, (2) Intelligence, (3) School achievement, (4) Family background, and (5) Age at the time of withdrawal and last grade completed.

Attendance. Most research shows that the non-scholastic factor of absenteeism actually differentiates students who withdraw from school from those who graduate. Lindquist found that the average drop-out from high school was absent approximately 15 days out of a school year of 180 days, while the graduate missed only 6 days.³ He wrote:

¹State of Illinois: Procedures for the Identification of Potential High School Dropouts (Office of Public Instruction, 1962).

²Harvey E. Walters and Gerald D. Kranzler, "Early Identification of the School Dropout," The School Counselor, XVIII, No. 2 (November, 1970).

³E. F. Lindquist, Design and Analysis of

Although the extent of the difference in absenteeism between drop-outs and graduates was not affected by sex or by the school size, it was significantly affected by the grade levels from which the withdrawals occurred. The differences between drop-outs and graduates was greatest for those who withdrew during the ninth grade and generally least for those who withdrew during the twelfth grade.¹

The problem of truancy is perhaps one of the first signs to indicate something is wrong with the student's attitude regarding school. The potential drop-out can find all sorts of excuses for not attending school.

Almost every study revealed a marked regression in the attendance pattern of the dropout as he moved from the elementary school to the secondary school. At the early elementary school level the factor of attendance is less significant than it is at the secondary level because students are not likely to be out of school without parental knowledge and consent. Therefore, this factor becomes more important as the student enters the secondary school.

Regarding attendance Greene stated:

One factor that appears to be somewhat related to attendance, and which is recognizable at the elementary school level, is the number of transfers a student has had. Mobility patterns, job factors, and other factors account for the great movements

Experiments in Psychology and Education (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin, 1953), p. 53.

¹Ibid., pp. 53-54.

made by some families. Generally speaking, dropouts have attended more schools than have the graduates.¹

Intelligence. Research shows that dropouts have lower average intelligence test scores than non-dropouts, but it also shows that there is a great deal of overlap in the mental abilities of the two groups. Greene stated that:

Although there is a slight difference in the mean intelligence quotient scores of dropouts and graduates, the difference is not so great as to account for the differences in performance. There is a greater difference in the performance of dropouts and graduates than there is in the intelligence test scores. This provides still another factor to be considered--the discrepancy between the potential and the actual. A student who performs at a level below his potential must be considered as a candidate for leaving school.²

Wilson and Buck studied 1,900 sophomores from seventy-four rural high schools in Pennsylvania. Those who remained in school were distinguished from dropouts in several ways. The stayins lived in villages rather than isolated rural areas; they were interested in science; they preferred white collar work; they had higher IQ's; they were from smaller families; and their parents were at least high school graduates.³

¹Greene, op. cit., p. 38.

²Ibid., p. 39.

³P. B. Wilson and R. C. Buck, "The Educational Ladder," Rural Sociology, XXXII (February, 1960), 404-413.

The United States Department of Labor's study of 22,000 school leavers found that the majority (54 per cent) of dropouts had average IQ's of 90-110 or better. Youth who had an IQ below this level were twice as prone to drop out as their more highly endowed teenage peers but at every level there was heavy overlapping.¹

Schreiber, of the National Education Association Research Division, made the following comment in regard to the intelligence of dropouts:

The records of I.Q. scores indicate that the average dropout is by no means uneducable. He tends, on the average, to score lower than his in-school counterpart, but a nationwide study conducted by the U. S. Department of Labor showed that seventy per cent of the dropouts surveyed had registered I.Q. scores above 90.²

Van Dyke and Hoyt found through a study of seventy-three Iowa high schools that the average intelligence quotient for dropouts was 96.6 and for non-dropouts 106.4.³

School achievement. Information concerning the relationship between elementary school scholastic records and dropouts was studied. There appeared to be a

¹Lucius F. Cervantes, The Dropout, Causes and Cures (Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1965).

²Daniel Schreiber, "School Dropouts," National Education Association Journal, LI (May, 1962), 52.

³Van Dyke and Hoyt, op. cit., p. 20.

substantial positive relationship present in that below average elementary grade point averages tended to be associated with dropouts much more regularly than with high school graduates.¹

The absence of relevance of learning to the potential dropout's aspirations sets the stage for him to become a nonparticipant in school. The withdrawal is spurred on by student and teacher rejection of him. Because he does not feel a part of the school body, research indicates he reads below grade level, he fails many subjects, he achieves little relative to ability, and he participates little in extracurricular activities.²

Greene commented further concerning reading ability:

Many studies demonstrate that the reading ability of the dropout is below average by as much as five or six years. All studies indicate that the dropouts are generally two years behind in reading.

It has been estimated that reading is necessary for 90 per cent of all of the subjects taught in school. A student with a reading disability will thus be severely handicapped in his performance in any subject where reading is an essential ingredient.³

Regarding reading failure and retention Cervantes stated:

¹Ibid., p. 32.

²Norman M. Chansky, Untapped Good (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 1966), p. 36.

³Greene, op. cit., p. 39.

The inability to read indicated two things to us: (1) teen-agers who do not read well enough for the work of their grade are likely to fail, feel frustrated, and discouraged; (2) the lack of verbal skills and communication abilities pointed to the deficiencies of their home environment.¹

Family background. The occupational and educational status of parents appears to be extremely important in the education of the youth. One must assume that the environment in which the dropout finds himself teaches him certain practical values but also negative attitudes about education and work.

The types of home conditions which predispose a student to leave school are important factors in the dropout process, but difficult to assess. Greene stated:

There is an apparent relationship between home conditions and dropping out of school, although the exact relationship is unknown. In many cases, the parents of drop-outs are drop-outs themselves and perhaps do not recognize the value of education. The parents may have had similar difficulties when they were in school and so can sympathize with their children. Or the parents may subtly transmit their attitudes toward school to their children and thereby help the student develop attitudes which predispose him to drop out.²

It would appear that there was a definite relationship between the educational level of the father and whether or not the child withdrew or persisted in school. Van Dyke and Hoyt found:

¹Cervantes, op. cit., p. 102.

²Greene, op. cit., p. 38.

The lower the educational attainment of the parents, the greater the tendency for an individual to withdraw from school prior to graduation.¹

And, concerning the occupation of the father:

The occupational class of the father is a significant factor in differentiating drop-outs from stay-ins and that its importance in differentiation is not affected by school size or sex of the subject. Therefore, this factor is, by itself, useful in predicting drop-outs.²

Schreiber made this summarizing comment about the effect of socioeconomics on the dropout problem:

The outcome of any school endeavor is found to be affected by the atmosphere of the student's home by the attitudes to which he is exposed outside the school. The majority of dropouts come from families of lower socioeconomic categories--families where the father is often missing, where cultural background and horizons are limited, where education is viewed with indifference or distrust, if not open resentment.³

Age at time of withdrawal and last grade completed. Many dropouts are failing in their school work at the time they leave school, and they have consistently failed to achieve in the regular school program. The student who meets with continual failure protects himself and his ego by withdrawing from the situation.

The research on dropouts reveals that many dropouts are older than their classmates. This is usually due to the fact that they have been retained in grade at

¹Van Dyke and Hoyt, op. cit., p. 50.

²Ibid., p. 52. ³Schreiber, op. cit., p. 52.

least once in their school career.

In his study Cervantes found:

Almost one-third of our graduates were retarded in school by one year or more but a startling four out of five of our dropouts were one or more years behind the normal grade for their age.

Time and again the dropouts stated that they felt "goofy" with those "little kids"--their age mates had already graduated and they felt out of place.¹

Van Dyke and Hoyt in their study of Iowa high schools found that:

The greatest number of students withdrew during the tenth grade (31 per cent), but the incidence of withdrawal was nearly as great in the ninth and eleventh grades (30.5 per cent and 25.3 per cent respectively).

Approximately 33 per cent of the withdrawals occurred at the age of sixteen with approximately 20 and 22 per cent occurring at the ages of fifteen and seventeen respectively.²

¹Cervantes, loc. cit.

²Van Dyke and Hoyt, op. cit., p. 55.

Chapter 3

PRESENTATION OF DATA

Chapter III includes the data obtained from the cumulative folders of the thirty individuals who were selected for this study. The findings are presented under the heading, similar characteristics of the dropout as determined by their school records.

I. SIMILAR CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DROPOUTS

Characteristics of the thirty dropouts that are pertinent to this study include the following: (1) attendance, (2) intelligence, (3) family background, (4) age at the time of withdrawal, and (5) last grade completed.

Attendance. The data obtained from the cumulative records reveal a marked increase in absenteeism as the students (both boys and girls) progress through school. Table I shows that the attendance of girls was poorer beginning in grade 4, which is significant in trying to identify potential dropouts early. This trend continued through grade 11 but not on into grade 12. There was not sufficient information available to determine why this trend did not continue.

TABLE I
AVERAGE ABSENTEE RATE OF DROPOUTS FROM GRADE FOUR
UNTIL DATE OF DROPOUT

| Grade | Average Number of Days Absent | |
|-------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| | N = 20 Boys | N = 10 Girls |
| 4 | 5.5 | 7.5 |
| 5 | 4.5 | 11.0 |
| 6 | 4.5 | 11.0 |
| 7 | 10.5 | 23.5 |
| 8 | 11.5 | 32.0 |
| 9 | 21.5 | 37.5 |
| 10 | 15.5 | 29.0 |
| 11 | 26.5 | 28.5 |
| 12 | 31.0 | 22.5 |

The table directly correlates with the reviewed literature, showing a marked regression in the attendance pattern of the student from the elementary school to the secondary school.

Another factor to be considered is the number of transfers a student makes during his school years. The frequent transfers may cause many personal adjustment problems for these students; and social acceptance would have to be one of the major problems they face.

Intelligence. The research noted that dropouts have a lower average I.Q. than do graduates. Table II reveals the average I.Q. of the thirty students tested.

The measurement instrument used was the Otis-Lennon Mental Ability Test. This instrument was used during the first semester of the eighth grade.

TABLE II
THE AVERAGE OF THE INTELLIGENCE TEST SCORES
OF THE THIRTY STUDENTS MEASURED
DURING GRADE EIGHT

| | Boys N = 20 | Girls N = 10 | Average N = 30 |
|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Average I.Q. score | 96.4 | 102.5 | 99.4 |

The average score of the thirty individuals is 99.4, which is actually higher than the 96.6 average found in the study by Van Dyke and Hoyt of seventy-three Iowa schools.

The average score of the girls may be somewhat high due to three girls with individual scores of 133, 128, and 124. This creates a problem in trying to assess the reasons these girls chose to drop out. They appeared to have the ability to reason, their school marks were good, and their attendance was much better than the average. This is one of the variables that creates a problem in predicting dropouts. The cumulative record does not give any insight as to what personal reasons they

may have had in deciding to terminate their schooling before completion of their senior year.

Family background. The cumulative record contains a fairly sufficient amount of information about the parents, the family size, the educational attainment of the parents, and their occupations.

It was pointed out earlier in the review of the literature that the environment in which the student finds himself may teach him certain attitudes about education and work. The attitudes formed in the home may be a major factor in the dropout process. The value of an education may not be considered important to the family; and, therefore, the student may not be encouraged to persist in his school work.

The literature stated that the lower the educational attainment of the parents, the greater the tendency to withdraw from school. This would then indicate an obvious relationship between the two. The fact that 73 per cent of the fathers did not complete high school points to a lack of incentive in the home in regard to education and attaining a high school diploma.

Table III presents the data concerning the educational attainment of the parents. Of the thirty families involved, 61 per cent of the parents did not complete their high school education. A total of 35 per cent of the

parents did complete their high school education; but only 3 per cent obtained any education beyond high school.

TABLE III
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF SUBJECTS' PARENTS

| Parent | Did not graduate from high school | Graduated from high school | Beyond high school |
|----------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Fathers | 22 | 8 | 0 |
| Mothers | 15 | 13 | 2 |
| Totals | 37 | 21 | 2 |
| Per cent | 61.6 | 35.4 | 3 |

This fact that 73 per cent of the fathers did not complete their education might indicate that the male may have quit school early in an effort to obtain employment. It might also indicate the attitude of the parent toward school while he attended.

Tables IV and V record the occupational grouping or positions held by the parents. The occupation of the father is more of a significant factor than the occupation of the mother.

There is a direct correlation between low-income families, uneducated parents, and semi-skilled or unskilled

jobs. By far the larger percentage of parents in this study worked in semi- or unskilled occupations.

Eighty-six per cent of the fathers were employed in some type of occupation, while 16 per cent of the mothers were employed in work outside the home.

TABLE IV
OCCUPATIONS OF THE SUBJECTS' FATHERS

| Occupational group | Less than high school graduate | High school graduate | Some college education |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Carpenter laborer | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| Deceased | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Factory employee | 9 | 3 | 0 |
| Retired | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Truck driver | 6 | 1 | 0 |
| Unemployed | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Totals | 22 | 8 | 0 |

The socio-economic condition of the family is hard to define. The information contained in the cumulative records relative to this factor was extremely limited. The educational level would indicate a lower-income group.

The cumulative record did contain the family size and the majority of families had at least six members. The majority of the mothers were in the home daily, with only 16.6 per cent working outside the home.

TABLE V
OCCUPATIONS OF THE SUBJECTS' MOTHERS

| Occupational group | Less than high school graduate | High school graduate | Some college education |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Housewife | 15 | 10 | 0 |
| Nurse | | | 1 |
| Office clerical | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Waitress | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Totals | 17 | 12 | 1 |

Age at time of withdrawal and last grade completed. One-third of the thirty dropouts studied had been retained for at least one year of school. The literature revealed that many dropouts are older than their classmates. This is another important factor in the decision of the dropout. When the student feels that he is too old for his peer group, he probably feels out of place. The student often feels as though he is a "tween

ager," between childhood and adulthood, between school and employment.

Table VI shows the age, grade, and sex of the students at the time when they dropped out of school.

TABLE VI
THE AGE, GRADE, AND SEX OF THIRTY SELECTED
SAYDEL HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS DURING
1969-70, 1970-71, 1971-72

| Age | Grade When Dropped | | | | | | | | Number | Per Cent |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|----|----|----|-------|----|----|----|--------|----------------|
| | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | | |
| | Boys | | | | Girls | | | | | |
| 14 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16 | 6 | 1 | | | 3 | 3 | | | 13 | 43.4 |
| 17 | | 4 | 1 | | | | 3 | | 8 | 26.6 |
| 18 | | | 3 | 5 | | | | 1 | 9 | 30.0 |
| 19 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 20 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Totals | 6 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 30 | 100.0 |
| Total Ninth Grade Dropouts | | | | | 9 | | | | | Per cent 30.0 |
| Total Tenth Grade Dropouts | | | | | 8 | | | | | Per cent 26.6 |
| Total Eleventh Grade Dropouts | | | | | 6 | | | | | Per cent 20.0 |
| Total Twelfth Grade Dropouts | | | | | 7 | | | | | Per cent 23.4 |
| Totals | | | | | | 30 | | | | Per cent 100.0 |

Chapter IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to determine those factors which could be used in the early identification of potential dropouts; to identify those characteristics shared by the individuals selected for this study who had dropped out of school; and to determine whether the characteristics were consistent enough to identify the individual as a potential dropout.

The procedure for this study began with a review of the related literature on the subject of high school dropouts. Following this, an examination of the cumulative school records of thirty students was conducted. These students had terminated their education before graduation during the 1969-70, 1970-71, and 1971-72 school years. The information obtained centered around the age and sex of the student and the grade he was enrolled in when he dropped out of school. The other areas of study were family background, school achievement, attendance, and individual I.Q. scores. This information was thoroughly examined, analyzed, and

summarized in order that conclusions and recommendations could be formulated.

II. CONCLUSIONS

The study shows that dropping out of school is related to a multiplicity of factors. The cumulative record can be used as a guideline to follow in a year-by-year look at an individual. It is, however, not all-inclusive, as it does not contain all of the information necessary to understand the personal reasons different individuals may have had for dropping out of school.

The information concerning attendance, academic achievement, family background (educational and occupational attainment), and the age of the individual in comparison with his classmates can be used as indicators in identifying the potential dropout.

The cumulative record reveals an accurate, up-to-date attendance record of each individual. The study revealed that the potential dropout has a higher rate of absenteeism than does the graduate. This was consistent with the reviewed literature in that the attendance pattern became much worse as the students moved from the elementary to the secondary school.

This problem of truancy appears to grow more prevalent during the beginning high school years. It

peaked at grade nine for girls and than at grade twelve for boys. The record contains the number of transfers from school to school. Several of the individuals involved in the study made numerous transfers during their school years indicating some instability of the family and their occupations.

The cumulative record reveals the academic achievement of each individual--kindergarten through grade twelve. Academic achievement, or lack of it is closely related to reading ability, mathematical ability, and verbal and communication skills. The record can reveal if there is a problem; but it does not diagnose the learning problem.

The cumulative record contains the I.Q. scores for each individual. The I.Q. scores of the students in this study are comparable to the scores cited in the literature that was reviewed. The major difference appears to be in the comparison of the performance of the dropout-non dropout than in the I.Q. scores.

The record also reveals that the largest percentage of students leave school at approximately age sixteen. This could be interpreted to mean that the students were "psychological dropouts" and were waiting until their sixteenth birthday to terminate their schooling. The largest number of students (30 per cent) terminated their schooling at the ninth grade level.

The record reveals a great deal about the family background. The size of the family, the education and occupation of the parents, and the religious preference of the family are included in the records. When comparing the child to the parent, the background information appears to be a very consistent predictor of the child's future success.

The cumulative record, however, does not describe the student's lack of interest in school work. The definitive reasons the student chose to terminate school are not indicated.

The cumulative record does not describe the status of the individual in a broken home, and the feeling of insecurity that accompanies this type of situation. The record cannot communicate a feeling of a "lack of belonging" on the part of the individual.

The cumulative record does not describe the socioeconomic status of the family adequately. The development of a poor self-concept and a lack of self-respect can be fostered in the low-income setting; but it is not revealed in the record of the individual.

On the basis of the data obtained from this study the following criteria appear to be the most useful predictors in identifying the potential dropout.

1. The attendance record of the individual from the elementary to the secondary level; specifically, as

the student enters his ninth and tenth grade years.

2. The age of the student as he enters the high school years.

3. The performance the individual demonstrates rather than the ability the I.Q. score indicates.

4. The occupational and educational levels of the parents appear to be consistent with the student's level of achievement.

5. The grade level of the student at the time he terminated his schooling.

On the basis of the data obtained from this study the following criteria appear to be the least useful predictors in identifying the potential dropout.

1. The I.Q. score of the individual.
2. The sex of the student.
3. The marital status of the parents.
4. The size of the family.
5. The mathematics level of the student.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

The first recommendation is that the cumulative record must contain more "personal" information about each individual. A structured autobiography administered through the English department in cooperation with the school guidance services might help to accomplish this.

This information could be useful to each person who had daily contact with the individual and who desires to know him/her better.

The second recommendation is that the guidance department should serve as a mediator between school personnel, parents and the potential dropout. Every dropout should receive guidance before and after he drops out of school. Visits to the home by the counselor and school administrator might be helpful in preventing student-school problems. The guidance personnel generally have immediate access to educational and family records concerning each student. The guidance personnel also have an opportunity for personal contact with the student.

The third recommendation is that the guidance personnel should work closely with the elementary teachers to gain insight in identifying the potential dropout. A preventive program should be inaugurated instead of waiting until the student is about to drop out, and then trying to attack the problem. The guidance personnel are available to the elementary teachers by phone and in-service contacts more readily than the classroom teacher.

A fourth and final recommendation would be additional changes in the curriculum offerings. It is difficult for the potential dropout to see the relevance

of school to himself, and in many respects he is justified. Courses should be developed to train these individuals for an occupation. Students want to be involved in courses in which they have an interest.

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